



SEWAGE APPEALS MEETING 3/4/2026 Minutes

Present: Thaddeus Hackworth (Berrien County Corporate Counsel & Sewage Appeals Board Chairperson), Dr. Wayne Gleiber (Sewage Appeals Board), Joseph Taylor (Sewage Appeals Board), Alex Ott (Berrien County Commissioner District 9 & Sewage Appeals Board), Nick Margaritis (Environmental Health Manager), Brian Murphy (Environmental Health Supervisor), Lindsay McNair (Environmental Health Program Support Specialist), Dan Yerks (Wightman Engineer), and Lauren Doerr (Wightman Engineer)

Absent: Ray Matejczyk (Sewage Appeals Board)

10:03 am: Meeting called to order by Thaddeus Hackworth

Approval of Agenda: Dr. Wayne Gleiber made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, second by Alex Ott, motion passed and carried.

Introductions: Those present made introductions

Approval of January 7, 2026 Minutes: Joseph Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Dr. Wayne Gleiber, motion passed and carried.

Sewage Appeal #1: Tim Hancz/Brian & Jaclyn Garland, 12749 Lubke Rd., 3.57 Acres, Parcel ID #: 11-13-0016-0019-13-0, New Buffalo Twp., Sec. #16

Berrien County Health Department Presentation: Applicant went through an appeal on June 4, 2025 where the board approved the property and the permit was issued by the Berrien County Health Department. Dan Yerks from Wightman Engineering, contacted the Berrien County Health Department and informed our office that the house had been redesigned. The Berrien County Health Department made a site visit to the property, and upon arrival noticed the foundation of the home was already dug and poured; making it an absolute necessity to figure out something different regarding the septic system. BCHD re-evaluated the original approved/permitted area and came across issues regarding setbacks from the home foundation and meeting isolation distances. The BCHD proposed moving the system to the original approved/permitted reserve area and finding an alternate reserve area. The builder and owners decided they did not want to use the reserve area, but rather evaluate an area further south of the original reserve area. The

BCHD conducted soil borings in the new proposed primary area on February 18, 2026. The soils remained the same, but the water table was higher and closer to the surface. After the site visit, discussion with Wightman Engineering took place and a new plan for the property was formulated.

Engineer Presentation: The reserve area from the original approval has stayed the same and the proposed septic field has been moved further south from the original approved area. The shape of the septic field has changed to fit within the constraints of the area and because of the higher groundwater the mound is a little taller. The new proposed system is very similar to what was previously approved, but in a slightly different location.

Discussion among Board Members, the BCHD, and Engineer: Mound size and changes to slopes were discussed as well as making sure no vehicles/heavy equipment go over the septic field area. The BCHD had no objections to the proposed plan.

Thaddeus Hackworth made a motion to rescind the Board's approval for this property from June 4, 2025 and to approve a system for a 5-bedroom structure with no garbage grinder as shown in revised drawings from Wightman Engineering dated February 23, 2026. The system will consist of (1) 2,000-gallon septic tank, (1) 1,500-gallon septic tank with effluent filter, and (1) 500-gallon dosing tank with visual alarm. This will feed a 1.5" force main leading to a 30 ft. x 85 ft. absorption field with three distribution valves. The system will be an Eljen sand filter system using B43 units. There will be 2 ft. of sand below the B43 units and above the high-water table. The mound will have a 7:1 slope. This approval is contingent upon a successful pre-construction meeting and all other customary inspections of the Berrien County Health Department. This approval is contingent upon construction of the mound during favorable weather conditions, dry soil, and protection of the absorption field area from compaction. All isolation distances and setback requirements must be met.

Motion was second by Joseph Taylor, motion passed and carried.

10:18 am Meeting adjourned

Submitted by: L. McNair 3/9/26